

Message Text

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14-11

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APPROVED BY -

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

INFO AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

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LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: OVIP, SA, SO

SUBJECT: SOVIET ACTIVITY IN SOMALIA

REFS: (A) ABU DHABI 1119 (NOTAL), (B) LONDON 7751 (NOTAL)

(C) MOGADISCIO 749 (NOTAL), (D) MOGADISCIO 777 (NOTAL)

IN BRIEFING SUWAIDI, AMBASSADOR SHOULD DRAW ON FOLLOWING:

1. SOVIET PRESENCE AND INFLUENCE IN SOMALIA HAS GROWN STEADILY OVER PAST SIX YEARS TO POINT WHERE TODAY THERE ARE MORE THAN 2,000 SOVIET MILITARY AND CIVILIAN PERSONNEL IN SOMALIA. WE BELIEVE THERE ARE SOVIET ADVISORS IN ALMOST EVERY IMPORTANT MINISTRY, AS WELL AS KGB ADVISORS WITH NATIONAL SECURITY SERVICE. PRESIDENT SIAD'S
SECRET

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POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC UTTERANCES ARE DOMINATED BY "SCIENTIFIC SOCIALISM", AND MANY OF SIAD'S SOMALI ADVISORS ARE MORE DOCTRINAIRE THAN HE. SOVIET-SOMALI RELATIONSHIP WAS CEMENTED DURING VISIT OF PRESIDENT PODGORNYY TO

MOGADISCIO IN JULY 1974 WHICH PRODUCED TREATY OF FRIENDSHIP AND COOPERATION OF THE TYPE SOVIETS HAVE PREVIOUSLY SIGNED ONLY WITH IRAQ, EGYPT, AND INDIA. WHILE WE BELIEVE SOMALIS WERE INITIALLY RELUCTANT TO TAKE THIS STEP, WE SEE LITTLE EVIDENCE THAT SIAD IS CHAFING UNDER SOVIET DOMINATION, ALTHOUGH RUSSIANS ARE PLAINLY UNPOPULAR WITH RANK-AND-FILE SOMALIS.

2. SOVIETS' CHIEF INTEREST IN SOMALIA LIES IN THE MILITARY FACILITIES ACCORDED THEM BY SOMALIS IN EXCHANGE FOR MILITARY AND ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE TOTALLING ALMOST DOLS 200 MILLION OVER LAST 15 YEARS. SOVIETS ARE CONSTRUCTING NAVAL MISSILE SUPPORT FACILITY IN BERBERA, AS POINTED OUT IN SECRETARY OF DEFENSE SCHLESINGER'S NEWSWEEK INTERVIEW OF MARCH 17, 1975. IN ADDITION, SOVIETS HAVE CONSTRUCTED 100,000 BARREL POL BUNKERING FACILITY AND NAVAL COMMUNICATIONS STATION AT BERBERA. THEY ARE ALSO CONSTRUCTING NEARBY A LARGE AIRFIELD WHICH MAY BE CAPABLE OF ACCOMMODATING ANY SOVIET MILITARY AIRCRAFT. SOVIET MARITIME PATROL AIRCRAFT OCCUPIED AN AIRFIELD IN SOMALIA DURING RECENT SOVIET EXERCISE.

3. BOTH SOMALIS AND SOVIETS HAVE REPEATEDLY AND VOCIFEROUSLY DENIED EXISTENCE OF SOVIET BASES PER SE AND DENOUNCED SUCH ALLEGATIONS AS IMPERIALIST FABRICATIONS DESIGNED TO DRIVE WEDGE BETWEEN USSR AND THIRD WORLD AND TO JUSTIFY US MACHINATIONS IN INDIAN OCEAN. SOVIETS HAVE GONE SO FAR AS TO IDENTIFY THEIR BERBERA INSTALLATIONS AS A DAIRY, MEAT-PACKING PLANT AND FISH CANNERY. HOWEVER, WE HAVE NO DOUBT THEY ARE MILITARY FACILITIES DESCRIBED IN PARA 2 ABOVE. ALTHOUGH SIAD DENIES EXISTENCE OF SOVIET FACILITIES, HE HAS NEVER MOVED TO DISPEL THESE "IMPERIALIST FABRICATIONS" BY, FOR EXAMPLE, INVITING CONTINGENT OF RESPECTED WESTERN AND THIRD WORLD JOURNALISTS ON UNIMPEDED INSPECTION TOUR OF BERBERA TO SEE FOR THEMSELVES. IN LATE MAY, GROUP OF ARAB JOURNALISTS DID TOUR BERBERA. HOWEVER, THEIR SUBSEQUENT REPORT OF FINDING NO SECRET

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RPT NO SOVIET INSTALLATIONS THERE APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN RIGGED BY SOMALIS. (SEE REFTELS (C) AND (D), BEING REPEATED FOR YOUR INFORMATION)

4. WE WOULD BE INTERESTED IN ANY REACTION TO THIS REPORT UAEG MAY WISH TO GIVE US. ALSO, WE WOULD BE HAPPY TO HAVE UAEG SEEK VERIFICATION OF ABOVE POINTS FROM OTHER CONCERNED STATES SUCH AS SAUDI ARABIA -- AS WELL AS FROM SOMALIS THEMSELVES.
KISSINGER

SECRET

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